

## ABSTRACT

An exhaust emission control system for an internal combustion engine has an exhaust passage switching device for switching an exhaust gas flow path, an HC adsorbent material disposed within the main exhaust passage for adsorbing and releasing unburned constituents in exhaust gases, and a control device for controlling the switching device such that the exhaust gas flow path is switched to the main exhaust passage when the unburned constituents is adsorbed by the HC adsorbent material, that the exhaust gas flow path is switched to the bypass exhaust passage when the unburned constituents adsorbed by the HC adsorbent material is released from the HC adsorbent material, and that the exhaust gas flow path is switched to the main exhaust passage when the release of the unburned constituents from the HC adsorbent material is completed.